

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009

**Remarks at a Reception for Governor Deval L. Patrick in Boston,
Massachusetts**

October 23, 2009

The President. Hello, everybody!

Audience members. Hello!

The President. Well, you hear a lot of politicians saying they're going to be quick—*[laughter]*—and then they go on and on. They say, "one last thing," "in conclusion." Deval is a man of his word. *[Laughter]* He says he's going to be quick, and he's quick. *[Laughter]*

I am so thrilled to be here today with the Governor and Lieutenant Governor. And at the outset, I just want to say—tell people a little story. I may have mentioned this to some other people before. I had just been elected to the United States Senate, and when I first started running for the U.S. Senate, not a lot of people knew me, and let's face it, none of you could pronounce my name. *[Laughter]* When I came to Boston to speak at the convention, everybody said "Huh?" You know, "Why him?" and all those questions.

But I will tell you, Deval Patrick knew my name; in fact, he had supported me, one of my earliest supporters outside of Illinois during that race. We had become friends because of some associations that he had with the Justice Department, and we had had a chance to meet. And I immediately thought, this is just a class act, and the fact that he had some Chicago roots and had worked himself up from, you know, from tough circumstances to achieve the extraordinary things that he achieved, I think, made him that much more appealing to me.

Anyway, I win the race, and I'm in Washington; I've just gotten my office set up, and suddenly, Deval says, "Listen, I want to come down and just talk to you about some things." He comes down, and he says, "I've decided to run for Governor." And I'm thinking to myself, now, he took a chance on me when I didn't have a chance, and frankly, I don't think he has a chance. *[Laughter]* But what could I do? *[Laughter]* I mean, he had already, you know, put himself out there in one hopeless cause, and the least I could do was reciprocate. *[Laughter]*

The truth is, though, actually, the minute he started getting organized, I said to myself, he is going to win. And the reason was that there's a core integrity about Deval, a sense that he wants to do the right thing and he is going to be tenacious in pursuit of the right thing, that he's going to speak truth to power, that he's not going to back down, that besides being extraordinarily gracious and just a good man, he's somebody who has a vision for the future that can excite people.

And so I slowly watched here in Massachusetts as this incredible grassroots movement began to build and people from all walks of life and all corners of the Commonwealth started to converge and say, you know, we thought he was Irish—"Patrick"—*[laughter]*—he's not, but we like him anyway. *[Laughter]*

And now what you've seen, in addition to a extraordinary campaigner and an extraordinary campaign culminating in victory, are the fruits of that labor. The fact of the matter is, is that since Deval took office, he has performed extraordinary things under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. There's not a tougher time to be Governor than right now. And yet without losing his cool, without losing that steady inner calm that he has, Deval has gone about the

business pushing through historic ethics reforms here in Massachusetts. Working with his terrific Lieutenant Governor, he's made sure that education isn't shortchanged, that this Commonwealth ends up being a leader in clean energy and biotech and all the innovative areas that are ultimately going to determine how well we're able to compete around the world. And as a consequence, there really should be no doubt that this guy gets a second term. There really should be no doubt that this guy gets a second term.

But having said that, let's be honest, this is going to be a tough race. Reelection is not a foregone conclusion, because times are tough, and Deval is the first one to acknowledge that there are a lot of people hurting out there. And although he and I are partners in making sure that we are continuing to fund basic research and we're continuing to fund education and we are implementing health care reform in a way that works for ordinary families, the fact of the matter is, is that when people look at a high unemployment rate and they look at tough budget decisions that have to be made, the argument that, "Well, things would be a lot worse if it weren't for Deval," and "Things are going to be a lot better as a consequence of Deval," that argument is a tough one to make.

It's a lot easier to be irresponsible. It's a lot easier to push off tough decisions. It's a lot easier to just say, let's just manage the status quo as best we can and spend a lot of time pointing fingers and blaming others for why we're not getting things done.

And so the question, I guess, that I'm going to have for all of you—and I'm going to have a chance to speak to the larger group, so I'm not going to make this a long speech—but to these folks here who are some of the core supporters, early investors in Deval's vision, the question I have for you is, were you in this just for the glamour and the excitement? *[Laughter]* Were you along for the ride just when it was easy? Or did you really believe in what Deval was talking about? Did you really believe that, you know, there was a gap between what could be accomplished in this State and the status quo and an understanding that it was going to take an enormous amount of effort and there were going to be a lot of ups and downs in order to close that gap?

If you really believed, if you understood fully the scope of Deval's vision, what he was talking about in terms of moving Massachusetts forward, then this should be an energizing moment. This should be a time where you are really feeling good, because you are ready then to enter into battle on behalf of that vision. It's going to take a lot of work. We're going to have to make sure that the same kind of excitement, the same kind of energy that was displayed the first time around is replicated on behalf of governance. And campaigning before you govern is always easy because everybody projects onto you whatever it is that they think should happen. *[Laughter]* Governance, that involves detail, that involves making tough choices, that means inheriting problems and having to grapple with them.

It means—governing means that you are having to prioritize. And you also begin to recognize that transformation doesn't occur overnight. I was having a conversation, I think, with some world leaders at the G-20 summit, and the discussion was around climate change and the fact that we're now moving the United States to the forefront, to leadership, as opposed to being in the caboose when it came to trying to deal with climate change. And some countries were feeling a little bit impatient: "Can't you get this done now?" "Why haven't we already affirmed the science that exists out there?"

I said, look, the United States is like an ocean liner. It's not a speed boat. If we make a shift of 5 degrees or 10 degrees, 10 years down the road, 15 years down the road, you're going

to look back and we're going to be in a very different place than we otherwise would have been. And we have to have that long-term vision about where we're going.

Well, States are just like the country as a whole. And I am absolutely confident that as a consequence of the tough decisions that this Governor is making right now, Massachusetts 5 years, 10 years, 15, 20 years down the road is going to be a much better place. And that's what we're fighting for. We're fighting for—and what Deval is fighting for here is the same thing we're fighting for all across the country. Some pretty simple things, complicated to execute, but pretty simple concepts.

We want every child in America to have a world-class education so they can compete for any job in the world; that's goal number one. We want a health care system that is efficient and effective so that people are actually getting their money's worth, that families are not bankrupt because they get sick and governments are not bankrupt because all the money is going to insurance companies and drug companies. We want to make sure that we are at the forefront of clean energy and producing millions of jobs in solar and wind and biodiesel. We want to make sure that we are creating jobs for the future, not low-wage jobs, not just jobs at the bottom rungs of the service sector, although we want to make sure that those jobs are paying a living wage and have decent benefits. But we also want to make sure that we're creating the jobs building a new smart grid and laying broadband line all across this country.

That's the vision that we're looking for. We want to make sure that everybody can retire with some dignity and some respect. And all those things are achievable, but it's going to take some work. So I just want all of you to understand that the road between now and next November is going to be long; there are going to be lots of ups and downs. Because Deval is continuing to govern, he's not just going to shift into political mode, even though some of his political advisers may tell him to. This is actually one of the few flaws of this man, is he doesn't always take direction—[laughter]—as well as he should.

So he's going to still be governing; he's still going to be making some choices. Some of them may not be popular. But if all of you recognize that his core vision is right, that his integrity remains intact, that he is not tired, he's energized, he's ready to go, he's still fired up—if all of you have that same spirit, then I'm absolutely confident that this team right here is going to win.

And I just want you to understand—and the last thing I'm going to tell you, I want everybody to understand this—that what happens in Massachusetts is going to have implications all across the country. I cannot succeed as President unless I've got good partners at the State level. And frankly, people on Capitol Hill, they watch the tea leaves, and they say, "Well, gosh, if the kind of Governor who's implementing universal health care in Massachusetts, and if the kind of Governor who's making sure that education funding is flowing steadily, if the kind of Governor who is prioritizing clean energy and basic research and technology, if that kind of Governor isn't rewarded, then maybe I shouldn't, as a Member of Congress or as a Senator, take some chances and take some tough stance in pursuit of that same vision."

And when the people of States reward courageous, hard-working Governors like that, that has implications for our national politics as a whole. So I just hope everybody here understands what a precious thing you have in Governor Deval Patrick and that you are going to be working as hard as you can and as sustained a way as you can in the months to come in order to make sure that he has another 4 years to do extraordinary service for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Thank you, everybody. Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:58 p.m. at the Westin Copley Place. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Murray of Massachusetts.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Governor Deval L. Patrick, reception in Boston, MA .

Locations: Boston, MA.

Names: Murray, Timothy P.; Patrick, Deval L.

Subjects: Budget, Federal : Government programs, spending reductions; Commerce, international : Group of Twenty (G-20) nations; Economy, national : Recession, effects; Education : Global competitiveness; Education, Department of : Funding; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Unemployment rate; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies; Energy : Infrastructure and grid improvements; Environment : Climate change ; Health and medical care : Cost control reforms; Massachusetts : Democratic Party event; Massachusetts : Education reform efforts; Massachusetts : Energy, alternative and renewable sources and technologies; Massachusetts : Government ethics reforms; Massachusetts : Governor; Massachusetts : Lieutenant Governor; Massachusetts : President's visits; Science and technology : Broadband technology; Science and technology : Research and development.

DCPD Number: DCPD200900841.